

Please note: changes in red were presented at the June 2003 OPSCOM; changes in blue are based on discussion at the March 2004 Intersessional and subsequent further review.

2.2 Operations Committee

2.2.1 History

The Argos Operations Committee (OPSCOM) was formed in 1978, in recognition of the cooperative effort by the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES) and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) governing the implementation and use of the global Argos Data Collection and Location System (DCS). The cooperation was first defined under the 1974 NASA-NOAA-CNES Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and its 1984 amendments governing the TIROS-N Satellite Data Collection System. The 1986 NOAA-CNES MOU for the Argos DCS and its 1991 and 1998 amendments contained in Appendix A superseded the 1974 NASA-NOAA-CNES MOU to cover the Argos DCS operations on the POES satellites.

Agencies contributing to the Argos DCS space segment are referred to as "Participating Agencies".

(please see 2.2.8)

2.2.2 Objectives of the Operations Committee

- to review the Argos DCS development, implementation and operations activities, and make recommendations to the Participating Agencies on appropriate measures for accomplishing the objectives as defined in section 4.1 of the 1986 NOAA-CNES MOU, namely, to, provide a system for the location, acquisition, and dissemination of environmental data, thereby, improving and expanding the capabilities of the global operational weather system, and supporting research and development in ocean, weather, and other environmental disciplines (*note: this may need to reflect also the letter amendments to the MOU; I will review before OPSCOM*);
- to review and approve applications for System Use Agreements and formulate criteria for approval of such applications received from prospective Users for the use of the Argos DCS. It is understood that in exercising its right to approve applications, each Participating Agency will take into account the principles of the Argos system use policy as defined on the System Use Agreements;
- to determine the tariff structure based upon a review of the Joint Tariff Agreement (JTA) and CNES recommendations applicable to the processing of the data by the Argos DCS data processing system. Such tariff structure proposals will be developed in light of the guidelines agreed by the Participating Agencies in the Argos OPSCOM Consolidated Report(*Note: If a section number is needed here, I will identify it prior to the OPSCOM*), and

updated as appropriate;

- to coordinate to resolve issues that may arise with respect to the implementation and operations of the Argos DCS. Issues having a financial impact shall be submitted to the proper management level of each Participating Agency for decision according to their own internal procedures.

2.2.3 Membership

The Argos OPSCOM will have equal representation from Participating Agencies. Each Participating Agency will designate a Lead Representative. The Lead Representatives will co-chair the OPSCOM .

Other entities participating in the OPSCOM will be:

- The representatives of the Agent (CLS and SAI);
- The chairman of the JTA;
- The U.S. ROC;
- Other invitees proposed by a Lead Representative, when relevant to the agenda of the OPSCOM meeting.

In addition, countries or space consortia that provide flight opportunities for the Argos instrument may partner with existing Participating Agencies, and become new Participating Agencies in the OPSCOM. Countries or space consortia can become observers to the Argos OPSCOM upon signing separate MOUs with CNES governing the Argos DCS operations. They will gain status as Participating Agencies in the Argos OPSCOM when an Argos instrument becomes operational on their spacecraft, and retain it throughout the instrument's lifetime..

2.2.4 Organization

The Argos OPSCOM will meet in session, in principle, annually. Ad hoc working groups may be convened at the request of any Participating Agency to consider specific issues in detail. Such working groups will report at the next Argos OPSCOM meeting. The Argos OPSCOM meeting will alternately be hosted by the Participating Agencies, except as otherwise decided.

The Consolidated Report will serve as a record of the decisions made by the Argos OPSCOM, and the policies and procedures of the system, but will be subsidiary to the MOUs that govern the Argos system.

2.2.5 Procedures

The format for the annual Argos OPSCOM meeting should be as follows:

A proposed agenda will be forwarded by the host organization at least 90 days in advance of the meeting. The agenda shall address at a minimum the following items:

- Adoption of the agenda
- Selection of the writing group
- Review of past action items
- Review of spacecraft system performance
- Review of the ground processing system
- Review of the Argos program, admissions and promotion activities
- Revision and approval of the draft minutes
- **Guidance for revision of Consolidated Report**
- Establishment of the date and location of the next meeting

Information concerning each agenda item will be prepared in written form as a “working paper” by the responsible organization. This information will be exchanged with the other organizations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

During the meeting a writing group will be appointed for the writing of the draft minutes each day. These draft minutes will be distributed to the members on the following day for review and approval. The final draft minutes and action items will be approved before the meeting adjourns, and appropriate sections of the minutes will be designated for inclusion in the Consolidated Report.

The host organization will be responsible for producing the final minutes of the meeting, and for making the appropriate revisions to the Consolidated Report as directed by the OPSCOM at the meeting. The completed final minutes and revised Consolidated Report will be distributed to all attendees within 90 days after the meeting.

2.2.6 Decision-making

Decisions will be made by consensus of the Lead Representatives of the Participating Agencies, either during the OPSCOM meeting or in the time frame between the meetings, as necessary.

Any decision that can not be reached by consensus will be referred to the signatories of the MOUs that govern the Argos system, with each Participating Agency having equal weight

2.2.7 Amendment

These Terms of Reference may be amended or modified by consensus of the Lead Representatives of the Participating Agencies.

2.2.8 Effective Date and Duration

NOAA and CNES agreed to adopt these Terms of Reference for the Argos Operations Committee on July 1, 2004. The Terms of Reference will remain in effect unless or until revised or terminated by consensus of the Lead Representatives of the Participating Agencies.

2.3 Procedures for System Use Agreement Approval

These procedures and principles will be applied:

- Electronic mailing is used as much as possible;
- All SUAs are sent to all Lead Representatives;
- Receipt of SUAs is confirmed;
- If no objections are raised by any of the Lead Representatives within two weeks, then the CNES Lead Representative signs the SUA and distributes it to the other Lead Representatives;
- If an objection is raised by any of the Lead Representatives, that Lead Representative is to provide the rationale behind the objection at the same time.

